

## Importance of Secrecy (Keeping Things Secret) In Islam A Research Review

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### ABSTRACT

Trust has different forms in Islam, including faithfulness in keeping people's secrets. Secret is called "SER" in Arabic, the plural of which is "Asrar". Keeping secrets or "Asrar" has been made obligatory by Islam for each and every Muslim. Allah Says: "Fulfill the assurances/promises made with people, indeed you will be asked about that (promise)". This is considered so important in Islam's view that disclosing a person's secret is considered as one of the capital sins. There are so many points being very important have been discussed in the article under reference in detail to make a beneficial document for all and sundry who want to further investigate this issue.

**Key Words:** Islam , Faithfulness , Secret, Muslim, Issue

### Literal and Idiomatic Meanings of Secret:

Famous Scholar *Imam Ahmad bin Faras Al Qazwini* has defined it in his words:

السِّرُّ، السِّينُ والرَّاءُ يجمعُ فروعُه إخفاءُ الشيءِ. وما كان من خالصه ومستقره. لا يخرج شيء منه عن هذا. فالسر: خلاف الإعلان. يقال أسرت الشيء إسرا، خلاف أعلنته.<sup>1</sup>

Literally, “ser” (سر) means a thing that is secured by a man with himself carefully and this is derived from its origin (س ر), which denotes the meaning of preservation of a thing by a man with himself carefully. It is said: (أسرت الشيء إسرا) “I kept a thing or word secret”. This word is used as an antonym of (أعلنته): meaning I disclosed or declared the same. *Imam Raghīb Asfahani* writes “المسار خلاف الإعلان” “maintaining secrecy is opposite to “announcing” a thing, as Allah has said: سِرًّا وَعَلَانِيَةً<sup>2</sup> “Israr” (concealing or covering a thing) is the antonym of “Al-I’alaan” (announcing publically). Allah says: “do secretly and openly” as

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quoted above and He adds: *يَعْلَمُ مَا يُسْرُونَ , وَمَا يُعْلِنُونَ* , “Allah knows the things which are kept by them as secret and those which are got opened by them”.

In another place Allah says:<sup>3</sup> *وَأَسِرُّوا قَوْلَكُمْ أَوِ اجْهَرُوا بِهِ* “And you people whether talk secretly or loudly (publicly), Allah Ta’ala knows that. *Imam Raghbi* has further explained the word “ser” in another place as he writes:

الإسرار إلى الغير يقتضي إظهار ذلك لمن يفضي إليه بالسرّ، وإن كان يقتضي إخفاءه عن غيره، فإذا قولهم أسرت إلى فلان يقتضي من وجه الإظهار، ومن وجه الإخفاء، وعلى هذا قوله: وَأَسَرَّتْ لَهُمْ إِسْرَارًا<sup>4</sup>

“Ser” is used for disclosing a thing only to that person for whom it is intended and to be kept concealed from those to whom it is not allowed to be disclosed. So this will be disclosed to the concerned person with the trust that he will not tell the same to any ones else. So the saying of an Arab that “he told a secret to a person, means that the same is being demanded from some other side to be disclosed to one but the one should not tell it (disclose it) to the others, it is called “ser”. The above cited narration of Allah is based on this concept ie “He called them and made them understand openly as well as in privacy”.

*Allama Munawi* tells the meaning of “Ser” as:

السر ما أخفيت، والجمع "إسرار"<sup>5</sup>

("Al-Ser" is that you have concealed.)

While Ibn Manzoor says in this regard: (السر الحديث المكتتم في النفس)<sup>6</sup> “Ser” is that “saying” which is kept secret in (one’s) heart. Allah says: (يعلم الجهر و أخفى)<sup>7</sup>

Allah knows a very secret saying of a person rather than the most secret and private saying as well.

Allah says in another place: (ان الله يعلم سرهم ونجواهم)<sup>8</sup>

(Indeed Allah knows the secrets of their hearts and their “whisperings”).

From all of the above cited discussion it appears that the word "ser" is from those of Arabic words which are giving two opposite (contradictory) meanings at the same time. Hence it denotes the meaning of “preserving a secret” as well as “disclosing a thing”.

## IDIOMATIC DEFINITION OR MEANING OF “SER” (سر)

Allama Ibn Manzoor Afriqi writes: <sup>9</sup> السر ما اخفيت، والجمع اسرار

“Ser” is that which you want to conceal, its plural is “Asrar”.

Allama Fadhal Allah (deceased in 1299 Al-Hijrah) writes in the “Sharh” of “*Al Adab Al-Mufrad*”:

قال ابن سينا في الرسالة الثانية في العهد: كتمان السر: ان يضبط الكلم من الانسان عن اظهار ما في ضميره مما يضر به اظهاره و ابداءه قبل وقته. <sup>10</sup>

Ibn Sina in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Journal under caption, “A’ahd” (عهد) has written that, the “preservation” of secret is to keep that thing “secured” in heart in a way that the same should not be disclosed before other people, disclosure of which has to cause great disadvantage or misfortune for him.

Allama Ibn Haban, (deceased in 354 Al-Hijrah) mentions the reason for calling “ser” as “ser” and says: ان السر انما يسمى سرا لانه لا يفشى <sup>11</sup>

“Secret is called secret because it is never disclosed” (before time). Regarding maintaining secrecy Imam Mawardi (deceased in 450 Al-Hijrah), writes:

كتمان السر ما صينت به الاقوال من الازاعة، و سترت به الافعال من الاشاعة فلم تر آثاره، ولم تتم اخباره فان لم تعم لم تتم. <sup>12</sup>

Safeguarding secret is that power of a man (human being) which when taken into consideration he secures his secret from becoming the same public. In this way all his affairs remain safe from being published; and consequently, neither the effects of this secret will come to the surface nor their information will become exposed to all. Hence, when these are not made public through media the same will ever remain secret and will not be known to any ones.

Imam Jahiz says:

منها كتمان السر و هذا الخلق مركب من الوفاء، و اداء الامانة. فان اخراج السر من فضول الكلام، و ليس بوقور من تكلم بالفضول <sup>13</sup>

Maintaining (preserving) secrecy is such a behavior which is a combination of dignity,(prestige) seriousness and dutifulness. Therefore, (it is proved that) disclosure of secret is like uttering useless negotiation and that person cannot be considered as serious one who always utters nonsense while talking.

### Importance of preserving secrecy in Societal and Islamic Circles

It goes without saying that the will for “secret keeping” is born with a man at the time of his birth. In other words it means that it is an essential part of man’s nature, and this is a very important component of his life rather we can say that it is an part of his body. No doubt, Islam respects the secrets of a man in his life and

even after his death as it gives due heed to his freedom within the limits of Islam. Without any binding law, every Muslim by nature is inclined to observe or keep each desirable secrecy. In Islam preservation of secret is among those good etiquettes the main spring (source) of which is the formidable “Faith” in Allah.

Like the life as it passes through different stages, the human nature of the preservation of secrets is developing day by day and its need of further strengthening it is also increasing. Due to this fact, the countries (nations) of the world are framing laws for observing secrecy so that they may run the affairs of the states in the best possible disciplined way. If, sometimes an individual happens to find no way other than punishing his personal servant for violating his instructions of keeping secrecy, the state is more in need for that than him, because its hazard is common for all and it can damage the complete “*Ummah*”.<sup>14</sup>

#### **Different Types of Observing Secrecy**

Keeping in view the different considerations of the observation (security) of “secret” apparently, it seems to be of different kinds, but when we discern into its intrinsic value, we come to know that the act of disclosing a secret depends on the benefit or loss of the man with whom this secret is related. So the disorder which is intended to be removed or, that well being which is being achieved (through the same secret) it can be examined through two angles:

- (1) The first one is that the person with whom, the secret has some relevance. In this case, this secret would be concerned with a real person who will be a man or with that unreal person eg: a company, an institute or state etc.
- (2) The second Angle is the status of those expediencies which are safeguarded by the Islamic Law or Islamic *Shariah*.

These secrets (sers) are further divided into two more segments:

1. The specific secrets : (الاسرار الخاصة) those secrets with which a man’s special prudence is attached; and the Islamic *Shariah*, safeguards the same for the reason that the dignity of mankind is secured. These are also called individual or personal secrets.
2. The general or common secrets related to the highest welfare of the state in comparison/contrast to other secrets are more liable to be given full attention and complete security. This can be achieved if its security is maintained

with full determination; and permanent arrangements are made in this regard. Our "Shariah" includes a secret in the list of general secrets provided clear and authentic "Quranic" or religious text (نص) is available about the same, which has restricted its nature or the same are called common secrets according to the customs/traditions of the concerned country. All such like secrets relate to different fields of life, eg economical secrets, political secrets, state secrets, industrial, defense and state secrets covering internal security.

It is very difficult to divide secrets to different segments, because while doing so different kinds of secrets are mixed up with each other. For example, the secrets related to the profession of a man are sometimes included in his common as well as special secrets, which are obtained by him through his profession. Similarly, some common secrets of a person can also be included in his specific or special secrets when there is a danger of some devastation to the state in their disclosure or the Government have passed a resolution for the inclusion of the same in secrets.<sup>15</sup>

Imam Raghīb Asfahani has divided secrets in the following way:

"السر ضربان: احدهما ما يلقي الى الانسان من حديث يستكتم و ذلك اما لفظا كقولك لغيرك: اكنم ما اقول لك و اما حالا و هو ان يتحرى القائل حال انفراده فيما يو رده او يخفض صوته او يخفيه عن مجالسـه. و لهذا قيل: اذا حدثك انسان بحديث فالتفت فهو امانة"<sup>16</sup>

"Secret is of two types: the first one is that to talk to a person and then put before him his demand to secure that, then this "demand" is divided into two types: the one is to say to him to preserve his saying with him (one type is verbal). The second one is that demand which is expressed through his body language: as he may take him into isolation and talk to him in low tone (whispering) or say to him in the outside from the interior gathering. Therefore, it is said that when a speaker looks here and there while talking to you, it means that the same saying is intended to be secured by you. "

"والثاني: ان يكون حديثا في نفسك ما تستقبح اشاعته او شينا تريد فعله و الى الاول من ذلك اشار النبي ﷺ بقوله: (من اصاب من هذه القاذورات<sup>17</sup> شينا فليستتر بستر الله)<sup>18</sup>

The second type is that a thing or an intention which you do not like to make that public, the first one has been pointed out by the Prophet (SAWS) in his saying wherein he said: whosoever may

happen to commit an immoral act, he may cover himself in the curtains of Allah.

It shows that how much "Shariah" is eager to secure the secrets of people. For this purpose the one who wants to say something to a person which is intended to be kept as secret, he must go with him in a lonely place and talk to him there. This talking in isolation is to stand for his verbal request. It is just like requesting him to keep the secrecy of the saying or act.<sup>19</sup>

والى الثانى اشار من قال : من وهن الامر اعلانه قبل احكامه، و كتمان النوع الاول من الوفاء، و هو رخص لعامة الناس، والثانى من الحزم و الاء احتياط و هو أخص با لملوك و اصحاب السياسة...<sup>20</sup>

And the second type has been referred to by the "Ulema" (Religious Scholars) in this way as it is said: to make a thing public before it is done, it shows the weakness of the thing intended to be done. The first type is loyalty in keeping the secret, which is related to general public, while the second one is only a sanity and carefulness which is specifically attached to political people.

Shaykh Mubarak Urmavi says:

ان السر سران: احدهما: سر ك و كتمان حزم. و الثانى: سر غير ك و كتمان كرم.<sup>21</sup>

There are two kinds of secret: (1) Your own secret: to preserve it is an act of wisdom and (2) the second is the secrets of others which to secure is an act of greatness and good moral.

It is reported in a "Hadith":

((استعينوا على نجاح الحوائج بالكتمان لها فان كل ذى نعمة محسود)).<sup>22</sup>  
"Get help for yourself by securing your secret to fulfill your needs and necessities, because people become jealous to the person who is prized (gratified) by Allah."

Keeping in view rules regulations and protocol of Islamic Shariah, security of secrets is a lawful and permissible act.

While sometimes, it is quite a chosen one, in the conditions when it is a great source/mean of procuring a permissible and lawful thing, provided there is a religious proof on the same being needed. For example: if there is a risk of some body's life, property or honor due to its disclosure or its unveiling can afflict some ( injury/pain) unpleasing effect on him so that should never be disclosed.. It is also permissible to secure a secret if there is a good amount of benefit (for the public interest) which is not causing any harm to any individual or public.

### **Educating Children to Strictly Secure Secrets**

Mostly we don't bother about children and forget the fact that they are living beings and they have the sense of curiosity, hence we

must educate them what is good to be disclosed to others and what is bad to do so.

Allama Muhammad Noor Syed writes:

((عن رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم بتنشئة الاطفال على خلق كتم الاسرار لا نه يمثل صلاح الطفل في حاله، ومستقبله و سلامة الآثرة و انطلاقها والمحافظة على المجتمع و بنائه.))<sup>23</sup>

The Prophet (SAWS) gave special attention on inculcating in children the habit of securing secrets, because this can play a better role in their present and future life. Similarly, it can protect them from selfishness and make them play a very basic important role in the security of the society and its development.

He further says:

((ان ا لطفل الذى يعود كتم الآ سرار ينشأ قوى الا رادة، رابط الجاش، ضابط اللسان فتنشأ عن ذلك الشقة الاجتماعية بين الاناس بحفظ الاسرار بعضهم لبعض))<sup>24</sup>

"It is a reality that the child who is accustomed to securing secrets will grow in such a conditions that he will imbibe formidable determination, strong heart and firm articulation, which resultantly creates a collective trust among the people in securing each others secrets".

The Prophet Muhammad (SAWS) while bringing up Hadhrat Anas told him:

احفظ سرى تكن مؤمنا<sup>25</sup>

Sayyedana Anas, following the instructions of the Prophet (SAWS) narrates his story in his own words and says, " One day when I was playing with children, the Prophet (SAWS) happened to come there. He (SAWS) paid "Salam" (greeted us) and then sent me to another place for fulfilling some of his needful there. After having done the same when I came home a bit later than the usual routine of mine, my mother asked me the reason for coming late. On this I told her that the Prophet (SAWS) had sent me for fulfilling some of his needful. My mother asked me to tell her the nature of the needful he had done. To this I replied that "this is a secret of the Prophet (SAWS)". Subsequently, she said:

((لا تحدثن بسر رسول الله ﷺ احدا.))<sup>26</sup>

" Do not discuss the secrets of the Prophet (SAWS) with any one else."

In the further explanation of this Narration (Hadith) Allama Muhammad Noor Syed says:

((فقال المؤمنة، الواعية، الذكية البصيرة لتعطى درسا للا مهات فى تعليم الطفل حفظ الاسرار ما قالت.))<sup>27</sup>

Hadrat Anas was advised by his mother, who was a firm believer, wise, conscious woman, possessing intellect as well as insight, "not to ever disclose a secret". By this advice she gave a lesson to the mothers of the Muslim Ummah to train their children in securing secrets."

For those persons whose profession is of a nature that disclosing their secrets related to their profession might endanger their lives or business, like doctors and the people involved in medical field, because mostly, needy people come to them for help him in their health problems. These people tell them all of their secrets so that they may help them in their problems. Among these secrets there are always such secrets which are not intended by the patients to be ever disclosed by them to their close friends and relatives.

### **Some of the Personal Secrets and Their Importance**

#### **Definition of Personal/Private Secrets:**

The personal or private secrets are those which are of a nature about which the concerned individuals are extremely eager not to be disclosed to any ones.<sup>28</sup>

Or the presence of a secret thing in the body of a person which includes all those defects (or vices) and diseases which are yearned by him not to be known to any ones. These defects are related to his properties and life style etc. The main spring of a person's private secrets is his individual specific life, because, there are two aspects of human life:

- (1) The first one is that aspect which opens towards the exterior and from it come into existence all of the social relations and general activities.
- (2) The second aspect is that which is related to his own person, family members and close friends. The first aspect is known as general/public life and the second aspect is called specific or special life. The exterior aspect of an individual's private life is not in the ownership of other people. Resultantly, in this aspect no such secrets are existing which are closely bound to the specific personal life and the matters related to this aspect of his private life are not made obligatory by the "Sharia'ah" to be secured.

#### **The Secrets Related to Matrimonial Relations**

Allah intends to allow establishing a permanent relationship between a husband and his spouse, by permitting their marriage as a lawful act. To attain this object Allah has prescribed certain



rights and duties for both the husband and wife for each other to observe properly. The fulfillment of all these obligations has been made compulsory for both of them so that the object aimed at by Allah may be achieved completely without any failure.

Amongst these rights are the rights of spouses related to matrimonial rights which are the secrets which are common for both of them and they are equally responsible to secure the same. When it is said that the relation established by the way of marriage is such a relation the foundation of which is laying on honesty, hence the husband and wife both are sources of secret keeping in numerous fields of life. Therefore, it is not permissible (as per Islamic law) for them to interfere in each other's affairs beyond those limits which are allowed as per "Sharia'ah". So far the wife is concerned she may compulsorily seek permission of her husband in several other matters.

The matters which are mostly wanted to be kept secret are their special relationship (physical contact) of both the spouses and the negotiations that happen between them at that time. The messenger of Allah Muhammad (SAWS) has forbidden from talking about all such things, because this is against the principles of mutual respect for each other rather as a matter of fact it (disclosing such like secrets) is the habit of sinful people, who are void of modesty and (lack morality).<sup>29</sup>

For this purpose in view, it has been forbidden for the spouses to disclose that secret which is disliked by them to be unveiled or which may damage their reputation and good name as specific secrets of this relationship is unlawful to be made public.

This is quite clear that relation of marriage is a very holy kinship. All of the private matters happening between wife and husband, fall under this chapter security of which is expedient and obligatory.

Allah says: <sup>30</sup>و اوفوا بالعقود ان العهد كان مسئولاً

"Fulfill the assurance/promise made with the people, indeed you will be asked about the promise".

The most important secret of both the spouses is about their meetings while they go to bed which is compulsory to be secured and not allowed to narrate the matters that occur between them.

Hadrat Abu Saeed Khudri says that the prophet (SAWS) says:

((ان من اشر الناس عند الله منزلة يوم القيامة: الرجل يفضي الى امرأته، و تفضي اليه ثم ينشرها))<sup>31</sup>

On the day of Judgment, the most degraded person before Allah would be that who (in this world) used to meet his wife (in complete privacy) and then made all of her secrets public.

Similarly, another narration is reported from Abu Hurairah wherein he says:

((ان رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم لما سلم اقبل عليهم بوجهه ، فقال: مجالسكم ، هل منكم الرجل اذا اتى اهله فاغلق عليه بابه و القى عليه ستره واستتر بستر الله؟ قالوا: نعم، قال ثم يجلس بعد ذلك فيقول: فعلت كذا، فعلت كذا، قال: فسكتوا، قال: فأقبل على النساء فقال: هل منكن من تحدث؟ فسكتن فجئت فتاة على احدى ركبتيها ، وطاولت لرسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم ليرها ويسمع كلامها، فقالت: يا رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم انهم ليتحدثون، وانهن ليتحدثن، فقال: هل تدرون ما مثل ذلك؟ فقال: انما مثل ذلك مثل شيطانة لقيت شيطانا في السكة، ففقدى حاجته و الناس ينظرون اليه.<sup>32</sup>

When the Prophet Muhammad (SAWS) (getting free from prayer) said " salam" after prayer , he looked at them (companions) face to face and said: remain seated at your places. Is there a person among you who comes to his family, then closes the door and puts a curtain on it and then covers himself with the curtain of Allah? The companions said: yes sir. The Prophet (SAWS) said: that after having done so , he sits ( with his friends) and says: I did this and did it like this. *Hadrat Abu Hurairah* says: the companions of the Prophet (SAWS) became silent. Then he turned to wards the women and said: is there any one among you who talks like this? They also became silent. During this time a girl sat on the coil (strength) of her one knee and started elevating her neck to see the Prophet (SAWS), so that he may see her and hear her saying. Then she said: O Prophet (SAWS) of Allah! Indeed! These men and these women both are talking like that. On this the Prophet (SAWS) said: do you know what is the example of this case? Then he (SAWS) said: this is like the incident that there meets a masculine Satan happens to meet a feminine Satan in a street and that masculine Satan fulfills his need of "courtship" with her in a state when all of the people present there are staring at them.

*Imam Shaokani* says:

ان هذا الحديث و حديث ابى سعيد: يدلان على تحريم افشاء احد الزوجين لما يقع بينهما من امور الجماع، و ذلك لان كون الفاعل لذلك من اشر الناس، و كونه بمنزلة شيطان لقي شيطانه ففقدى حاجته منها والناس ينظرون، من اعظم الادلة الدالة على تحريم نشر احد الزوجين للاسرار الواقعة بينهما الراجعة الوطء، و مقدماته، فان مجرد فعل المكروه لا يصير به فا علم من الاشرار فضلا عن كونه من شرهم، و كذا لك الجماع بمرئى من الناس، لا شك فى تحريمه.<sup>33</sup>

This saying of the Prophet (SAWS) and that of *Abu Saeed-Khudri* prove that the matters related to the meetings of the husband and wife are special secrets the disclosure of which is unlawful for both of them. The reason for that is this that the person who ever does such a thing, is among the worst people of the world. He is just like that (male) Satan who meets a (female) Satan to fulfill his need in the state of the affairs that all people present there are staring at him. This is from those great proofs which prove that spreading news of the meetings of both of the spouses are, equally unlawful for both of them. Because, by practicing an unlawful act not only a man is counted among the mischievous people but rather he is included in the worst people of the world. Similarly, meeting (physically contacting or having courtship) by a man with his wife publically is no doubt strictly for bidden in Islam.

(He further adds that): this unlawfulness is restricted to the details of the discussion related to the private meetings that happen between the spouses. Also it is restricted to the negotiations or an act that happens during those private meetings. Discussing simply the private meetings of a husband and wife is against human dignity; because this is a purposeless negotiation.

The proof of the permissibility of the secrets of a husband and wife regarding activities other than their private meetings is Allah's this ordain:

وَاِذَا اسْرَ النَّبِيُّ اِلَى بَعْضِ اَزْوَاجِهِ حَدِيثًا فَلَمَّا نَبَّأَتْ بِهِ وَ اَظْهَرَ هُ اللّٰهُ عَلٰى عَرَفِ بَعْضِهِ  
وَاَعْرَضَ عَنْ بَعْضِ فَلَمَّا نَبَّأَهَا بِهِ قَالَتْ مَنْ اَنْبَاكَ هَذَا قَالَ نَبَاَنِ الْعَلِيمِ الْخَبِيرِ<sup>34</sup>

O you! Remember when the Prophet (SAWS) had said a word to one of his wives to be kept secret. Then when she disclosed that to some other person, Allah informed the Prophet (SWAS) regarding the state of the affairs. The Prophet(SAWS), subsequently made his wife confess some part of her saying and some part or portion of the saying was hushed up by him (SAWS). When he (SAWS) proved the disclosure of the saying to others, the wife asked him as to who had informed him about that disclosure. On this the Prophet (SAWS) told her that He was told by the One (Allah) who is great knowledgeable and well informed.

In this verse the word " Asarra" (اسر) means that saying of the Prophet (SAWS) was that which he (SAWS) had secretly told "Hafsah" that he (SAWS) had declared his wife "Maria Qubtia" as unlawful for himself. Explaining this verse, Ibn Abbas says that, from "Assara" was meant his (SAWS) telling "*Hafsah*" as to who would be the "*Khalifa*" (vice regent) after him, but *Hadhrat Hafsah*

disclosed that to others. However, what ever was the secret, she went to "Hadrath Aisha" and told the same to her. Allah informed the Prophet (SAWS) about the same. The Prophet (SAWS) called for Hafsa and told her some of her words that she had uttered before Aisha Siddiqa and retained some of the words with him. Due to this incident the Prophet (SAWS) got so grieved that he (SAWS) gave one (Raje'a) divorce to Hafsa. On this *Hadrat Umer Bin Al-Khitab* said:

(لو كان في آل الخطاب خيرا لما كان رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم،  
 طلقك، فأمره بمراجعته).<sup>35</sup>

If the family of Al-Khitab (father of Hadrat Umer ) had possessed some goodness, the Prophet (SAWS) would have never divorced her. Then Hadrat Jabrail (AS) came and asked the Prophet (SAWS) to make resort to her and hence he (SAWS) resorted to her.

The Prophet (SAWS) accounted his wife for disclosing his private (secret) saying which was not related to husband wife special discussions or acts. This proves that safe guarding such like common/ordinary secrets is also obligatory.

It is, therefore, quite clear that security of only those secrets relating to spouses private meetings is not obligatory, but all of other secrets are also needed to be secured. As it became evident from the above cited Ahadiths, rather talking about any of the activities happening in the houses is not advisable. In the matrimonial life of a couple, the things which are required to be kept secret out of all of their other matters, can be understood from the customs and habits of the people of the area. May these affairs/matters relate to economic, or some deficiency or defect or with some other things, the people usually do not like them to be disclosed especially by a member of the family to others.

In the matrimonial life security of secrets is too much needed for the happy life of the couple. That is why when the day of the marriage of Umm Ayas Bint Aof Bin Muslim with the King of "Kandah" drew nearer, her mother Umama Bint Al-Haris, advising her said:

((فال فلا تعصين امرا، ولا تفشي له سرا، فانك ان خالفت امره او غرت صدره،  
 وان افشيت سره لم تأمن غدره)).<sup>36</sup>

"You should neither disobey him in any of the matters, nor disclose any of his secrets, because if you do not act upon any of his advice, it will cause grudge and disliking in his heart against you. (In addition to that) if you disclose any of his secrets then it is

possible that he may deceive you and avenge you". Due to the importance of secret, the Prophet (SAWS) called to account his wife Hafsa, when she disclosed the same secret; as it is contained in the Quranic verse. It proves that the wife should not disclose any secrets of her husband.

Securing the secrets of the matrimonial life by the couple is not only obligatory till their bondage of marriage is intact, rather they should maintain observing the same obligation even after the separation of the wife and husband. Regarding this situation *Imam Ghazali* has narrated a story that a pious (good) man decided to divorce his wife, so somebody asked him:

(( ما الذى ير يبك فيها؟ فقال: العاقل لا يهتك سر امرأته، فلما طلقها قيل له: لم طلقته؟ قال: ما لى و لا مرأة غيرى ))<sup>37</sup>

"What is her vice due to which you want to divorce her? To this he replied "a wise person would never disclose his wife's secrets to others." When he divorced her, somebody asked him, "why did you divorce her?" On this he said, " what is my concern with other people's wives?"

Is the real Religious ordain regarding "Secret" (ser) of securing it or disclosing it?

The genuine state of affairs about the Secret is that it should be secured what ever the case may be. The proofs are as given below:

- (1) Those traditions (Ahadiths) which are reported about the special/personal secrets which are essential to be secured:

The Prophet (SAWS) says:

((كل امتى معافى الا المجاهرين، وان من المجاهرين ان يعمل الرجل بالليل عملا، ثم يصبح وقد سره الله فيقول يا فلان عملت البارحة كذا وكذا، وقد بات يستره ربه، و يصبح يكشف ستر الله عنه))<sup>38</sup>

All members of my Ummah will be forgiven (on the day of Judgement) but none of the individuals committing sins openly will be given salvation. Amongst the people who are committing sins in public is that person who does some act at night dully covered by Allah with a curtain, but in the dawn he starts saying: O you! I did such and such last night, while the state of affairs is that he has spent his night in such a condition that Allah went on putting on him His curtain to secure his secret, but when it is dawned, he started removing the same curtain from himself.

Similarly, *Imam Malik* has reported a Hadith from *Zaid Bin Aslam* and says that a person in the era of the Prophet (SAWS) confessed to have committed adulteration. The Prophet Muhammad (SAWS) called for a whip to beat the same person with, but a broken lash

was brought. On this the Prophet (SAWS) said such a whip is required which may be a little bit superior than that. Then another whip was brought, the ploughshare of its wood had not yet been removed. There after the Prophet (SAWS) said once again that another lash may be brought which may be of inferior nature. Then another whip was brought which had become a little bit soft due to its use and the Prophet (SAWS) ordered to beat the person with the third one. Then he (SAWS) said:

ايها الناس! قد آن لكم ان تنتهوا عن حدود الله، من اصاب من هذه القاذورات شيئا فليستتر الله بستر الله، فانه من يبدى لنا صفحته نقم عليه كتاب الله..<sup>39</sup>

O you people! The time has come so that you may restrain your selves from crossing the limits. The person who commits any of the mentioned wrong doings, he must cover himself with the curtain of Allah (should not disclose that before the people proudly), because the person who makes his sin public in front of us we would issue decree to be punished according to the prescribed punishments of Allah.

These two Ahadiths prove that mankind is bound to protect his secrets to be made public, whether the same secrets are about bad deeds or good ones. However, if he confesses the same and makes the same public he would be penalized in the light of the law and rules of "Islamic Shariah".

Sheikh Abu Uthman Al-Jahiz writes:

((السر ما ابقاك الله اذا تجاوز صدر صاحبه و اقلت من لسانه الى اذن و احدة، فليس بسر، بل ذاك اولى باذاعة و مفتاح النشر والشهرة)).<sup>40</sup>

Allah may protect you from all hazards! When a secret slips from the chest of an individual and it reaches through the tongue of a companion to the ear of another person, then it never remains a secret., but it is now liable to be published and made public.

The second proof on the compulsion of securing a secret:

If an individual happens to see an incident faced by another person which is purely related to his personal/private life, then the witness propagates and discloses that secret, it is called dishonesty. Where as an individual listens the secret of a person while he is telling about that secretly to another person and then he discloses the same to others, this is called back biting. These both acts are forbidden in the light of Islamic Law.

Imam Mawardi says:

((اظهار الرجل سر غيره اقبح من اظهار سر نفسه، لا نه يبوء باحدى و صمتين: الخيانة ان كان موثما، او النميمة ان كان مستودعا، فا ما الضرر فربما استويا فيه او تفا ضلا، و كلاهما مذموم فيهما ملوم)).<sup>41</sup>

May Allah protect you! Spreading another person's secrets is an act worse than disclosing his own secrets, because this is the show of one characteristics out of the two ie either this is dishonesty as some shameful act happened before him and he passed on that to others, or he tells the others about his own secret (the first one is dishonesty and the second is back biting). As far as the damage caused by this disclosure is concerned, the same is either equal or there is very delicate difference between these two. However, these both acts are contemptible and the discloser is liable to be blamed for the same in both the cases.

Similarly, Imam Ghazali says:

((من ذاك له ان يسكت عن افشاء سره الذي استودعه، و له ان ينكره وان كان كاذبا، فليس الصدق واجباً في كل مقام، فانه كما يجوز للرجل ان يخفي عيوب نفسه و اسراره وان احتاج الى الكذب فله ان يفعل ذاك في حق اخيه، فان اخاه نازل منزلته، و هما كشخص واحد لا يختلفان الا بالبدن، هذه حقيقة الاخوة، و كذا لا يكون بالعمل بين يديه مرانياً و خارجاً عن اعمال السر الى اعمال العلانية فان معرفة اخيه بعمله كمعرفته بنفسه من غير فرق))<sup>42</sup>

The trustworthy (To whom a secret has been assigned to be secured), should remain silent about the secret only known to him. Even it is permissible for him in Shariah if he is compelled forcefully for disclosing the same, he should refuse. He will not be counted as liar before Allah if he does so. Because as it is permissible for a person to keep his vices and other secrets secured, even he happens to tell a lie for that, in this way he should behave like that in respect of his (Muslim) brother. This is wanted because his Muslim brother is also like him and these both are like one individual. If there is any difference between them that is on the basis of their bodies. This is the reality about fraternity. Similarly, when he happens to commit any act in his presence, so due to this relationship he does not consider his acts to be excluded from the list of the collective secrets. The reason is that being his brother aware of his secrets is like the fact to be knowing himself the same. There is no difference between these two conditions.

The focal point of the security of the secrets of others is that sign of brother hood which keeps all Muslims integrated with each others. This is also a fact that ascertainment of the said focal point is not only made in this life of a man rather it remains intact after his death. This is the reason that the binding conditions for the laver (the undertaker whose work is restricted to washing the dead

corpse) is not to mention without any dire need the defects of his body which he has noticed during washing his body.

*Khateeb Sharbeeni* writes:

((فإن رأى الغاسل من بدن الميت خيرا كاستنارة وجهه و طيب رائحته ذكره ندبا، ليكون ادعى لكثرة المصلين عليه و الدعاء له، او غيره كان رأى سوادا او تغير رائحته او انقلاب صورة حرم ذكره، لانه غيبة لمن لا يتأتى الاستحلال منه))<sup>43</sup>

If the laver (the undertaker whose work is restricted to washing the dead corpse) ever happens to see any good signs on the body of the dead, as either his face is brightly shining or pleasing fragrance is emitting from his body, mentioning the same to others is better and good. So that the number of those who are offering his funeral prayer is increased, but if he sees some bad signs eg, change in his body smell or change in his body structure, then to tell that to others is prohibited and unlawful, because it is just like his back biting and that is not allowed in Islam.

The Prophet (SAWS) says: ((أذكروا محاسن موتاكم و كفوا عن مساويهم))<sup>44</sup>

Try to discuss the good deeds of those who have died and avoid from mentioning their sins.

The Prophet (SAWS) also says: ((من غسل ميتا فكتب عليه غفر له أربعين مرة))<sup>45</sup>

The person who undertook washing the dead body of a Muslim and he did not disclose (the seen defects) to others, his misdeeds would be forgiven by Allah forty times.

The proof regarding increasing the number of witnesses in Adulteration cases than the other cases:

Islam has increased the number of witnesses in the cases of adulteration only for the reason to bring consistency in securing the secrets of the people. Allah says:

((والذين يرمون المحصنات ثم لم يأتوا بأربعة شهداء فاجلدوهم ثمانين جلدة))<sup>46</sup>

(Those who defame their pious wives with the blame of adulteration and then cannot produce four witnesses on this act, shall be beaten eighty whips as punitive action)

The Prophet (SAWS) has pointed out to this. He (SAWS) said to *Hilal Bin Ummia*:

((أربعة شهداء، والا فحد في ظهرك))<sup>47</sup>.

(Regarding your wife adulteration) present four witness otherwise for this blaming sin you will be given punishment with whips).

Proof of not disclosing news about adulteration and arranging compromise:



Adulteration is one of the greatest sins and when an individual happens to commit the same, Allah likes its concealment (covering up). Neither the criminal should confess it before the Judge nor disclose it to any one else so that immodesty may not spread in the society, because due to the commitment of only adulteration the spread of the talks about such incidents is very dangerous for a Muslim society. The Prophet (SAWS), therefore, said:

((ايها الناس! قد آن لكم أن ان تنتهوا عن حدود الله، من اصاب من هذه القاذورات شينا فليستتر بستر الله فانه من يبدى لنا صفحته نقم عليه كتاب الله.))<sup>48</sup>

O, people! Now the time has come to restrain your selves from crossing/breaking the restricted lines of Allah. Who so ever amongst you, falls in any one of these immodesties (dirt or filth) he should cover himself with the sheet of Kindness of Allah, because the person who would confess the sin, we would proceed according to the instructions of the Holy Quran to punish him.

Imam Malik reports from Saeed Bin Al- Muasib that" a person from Aslam Tribe came to Hadrat Abu Bakr and said, I have committed adulteration". On this, Abu Bakr said , " have you disclosed this thing to any one else except me?". The man said, "No".

Then Hadrat Abu Bakr said: (فتب الى الله، و استتر بستر الله، فان الله يقبل التوبة عن عباده)<sup>50</sup>

Show penitence before Allah and cover up yourself with the sheet of Allah regarding His Kindness, because Allah accepts the penitence of His servants.

Therefore, when covering up great sins is desirable then securing these secrets is more desirable as per Islamic Law. For all Muslims, it is better to keep these things as a secret in their hearts and should not disclose the same without dire need.

Those Traditions of the Holy Prophet having been reported in respect of the secrets related to Professions:

The Islamic Sharia'h has strictly directed Its followers to secure their secrets related to Professions:

Hadrat Sabit has reported from Anas Bin Malik:

((اتى على رسول الله صلى الله على و سلم وانا العب مع الغلمان، قال: فسلم علينا، فبعثنى الى حاجة، فابطأت على امى، فلما جئت قالت: ما حبسك؟ قلت: بعثنى رسول الله صلى الله عليه و سلم لحاجة، قال: ما حاجته؟ قلت: انها سر، قالت: لا تحد ثن بسر رسول الله احدا. قال انس: والله لو حد ثت به احدا لحدثتك، يا ثابت!))<sup>51</sup>

The Prophet (SAWS) came to me during the time when I was playing with the boys. "He greeted us with "Salam" and then sent me for some needful. Due to this reason I got late to go to my

mother, but when I came to her, she asked: "why did you come late?" I replied that the Prophet (SAWS) had sent me for fulfilling some of his needful. She asked as to what was the needful? I said that the same is secret. She said, "Its ok, do not disclose the secret of the Prophet before any ones.". Hadrat Anas says, " O Sabit! By Allah! If I had to disclose the same to any body, I would have told that only to you."

Securing Secrets of the Muslims is the basis for success in the life herein- after.

The Prophet (SAWS) says: <sup>52</sup>((من ستر مسلما ستره الله يوم القيامة))

The person who covers up a Muslim (does not disclose his secret), will be covered with a curtain by Allah on the Day of Judgment.

Similarly, He (SAWS) says:

<sup>53</sup>((لا يستر عبد عبدا في الدنيا الا ستره الله يوم القيامة))

Islam has time and again advised the Muslim not to make their secrets public without a dire need.

Those secrets which may cause disorder in the moral mechanism of the society comes under the serious crimes of spreading vulgarity, from which Allah had forbidden His servants by this ordain:

(( ان الذين يحبون ان تشيع الفاحشة في الذين آمنوا لهم عذاب اليم في الدنيا و الآخرة)<sup>54</sup>

"Do remember that those people who want to spread Immodesty among the Muslims, for them there is painful torment (punishment) in the world here in after".

When it is clarified from the above statements that the main view point of Islam is to attain welfare of the life herein after and the sources necessary for that, so simultaneously, it also has been clarified that covering up/securing secrets is also essential, because it is one of the sources of the said good well.

Having discussed a sufficient amount of arguments here in, these speak of the fact that in Islam the main essence of all things is securing a secret and folding the same as much as possible.<sup>55</sup>

### CONCLUSION

From the above discussion it has been established that the nature of a man is that he always intensifies his efforts to attain benefits and not to face any loss in the struggle of his life. His desire is to achieve the target. For example, now a day this is our aim to combat the hostile powers and achieve the target without being harmed by them. This is possible only when we are determined to safeguard our secrets. This is also necessary for that purpose to

strengthen ourselves to the extent that we may become equally strong or stronger than our enemies. Resultantly, this would also be direly required that we may, properly utilize the same power when need be. For achieving the same target, safeguarding the secrets is very essential.

Maintenance of official and national secrets has been proved to be an unavoidable obligation of each Muslim. This has been substantiated by the Quranic verses and Ahadith of the Prophet (SAWS). In addition to that, the sayings and practices of the Prophet (SAWS), his companions, Tabi'een and the other true Muslims' words and practices are supporting the same proposition. Hence, it is proved that safeguarding secrets is the religious as well as official duty of each reasonable person. This is very much binding on those who are assigned duties in national security and political movements of the beloved country. If they abide by the instructions of Quran and the sayings of the Prophet (SAWS) as already explained in this article, we are sure that they would come out victorious in the struggle of their lives.

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